

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FOLLOWING SENT ACTION NEW DELHI INFO BOMBAY AND CALCUTTA FROM
MADRAS DEC 24, 1975 REPEATED FOR YOU

QUOTE
MADRAS 1982

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJECT: TWO KERALA CONGRESS NOMINEES JOINING ACHUTHA MENON
MINISTRY ON DECEMBER 26

1. K.M. GEORGE, CHAIRMAN OF KERALA CONGRESS, ANNOUNCED IN COCHIN
ON DECEMBER 23 THAT K.M. MANI, MLA AND R. BALAKRISHNA PILLAI,
MP, BOTH GENERAL SECRETARIES OF KERALA CONGRESS, WILL JOIN THE
ACHUTHA MENON COALITION MINISTRY ON DECEMBER 26. GEORGE SAID THAT
MANI WILL HOLD THE PORTFOLIOS OF FINANCE, LAW AND LEGISLATION
AND PILLAI WILL HOLD THE PORTFOLIOS OF TRANSPORT, EXCISE AND JAILS.
GEORGE ALSO SAID THAT T.S. JOHN, ANOTHER KERALA CONGRESS MLA,
WAS CHOSEN BY HIS PARTY FOR THE VACANT SPEAKERSHIP OF THE KERALA
ASSEMBLY.

2. EARLIER THE SAME DAY GEORGE SAID IN MADRAS THAT HIS PARTY
HAD DECIDED TO JOIN THE KERALA MINISTRY BECAUSE IT COULD NOT
SHUT ITS EYES TO THE GREAT CHANGES THAT HAD BEEN TAKING PLACE IN
INDIA. HE NOTED THAT EFFORTS HAD BEEN MADE ON MANY OCCASIONS
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DURING THE LAST ELEVEN YEARS TO BRING ABOUT RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN

THE KERALA CONGRESS AND THE CONGRESS, BUT THIS TIME IT WAS THE PRIME MINISTER WHO HAD TAKEN THE INITIATIVE AND "THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO CONTACT AT THE STATE LEVEL." IT WAS THE TACT OF K.C. PANT AND THE PERSONAL INTEREST OF THE PRIME MINISTER THAT HAD MADE THE UNDERSTANDING POSSIBLE, HE SAID; THE IMPORTANCE OF HIS PARTY HAD BEEN RECOGNIZED AND "CONGRESS HAD STOPPED TO CONQUER." HE HOPED ELECTIONS TO THE KERALA ASSEMBLY WOULD BE CONDUCTED SOON SO THAT A NEW POPULAR GOVERNMENT COULD ASSUME OFFICE.

3. A.K. ANTONY, KPCC(R) PRESIDENT, SAID IN MADRAS DECEMBER 23 THAT POLITICAL STABILITY HAS BEEN ASSURED IN KERALA FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. "WE CAN SWEEP THE POLLS WITH THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENT," HE SAID, AND "WE ARE READY TO FACE ELECTIONS AT ANY TIME."

4. COMMENT: THE INDUCTION OF THE KERALA CONGRESS INTO THE RULING COALITION FRONT WILL STRENGTHEN ITS STABILITY AND GIVE THE MINISTRY FOR THE FIRST TIME A COMFORTABLE MAJORITY (77 OUT OF 134 VOTES) IN THE KERALA ASSEMBLY. THE DEFECTION OF THE KERALA CONGRESS FROM THE CPM-LED OPPOSITION FRONT IS ALSO A SETBACK TO THE CPM AND WILL UNDOUBTEDLY WEAKEN THE CPM FRONT, WHICH, VIBARRING THEREBEL MUSLIM LEAGUE, NOW HAS ONLY MINOR PARTIES, WHICH ARE MORE OF A BURDEN THAN AN ASSET TO THE CPM. THE STRONG SUPPORT TO THE KERALA CONGRESS BY CHRISTIANS, WHO COMPOSE 20 PERCENT OF KERALA'S POPULATION, WILL ALSO BENEFIT THE RULING COALITION IN THE NEXT ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS. THE RAPPROACHMENT BETWEEN THE CONGRESS (R) AND KERALA CONGRESS SHOULD ALSO STRENGTHEN THE CONGRESS BASE WITHIN THE COALITION AND WEAKEN THE INFLUENCE EXERCISED BY THE CPI, WHICH ALTHOUGH A NUMERICALLY MINOR PARTNER, IS LEADING THE COALITION. THE KERALA CONGRESS SHOULD HAVE A MODERATING INFLUENCE ESPECIALLY ON THE MORE RADICAL LAND AND EDUCATION POLICIES DEMANDED BY BOTH THE CPI AND THE YOUTH CONGRESS, AND K.M. GEORGE HAS ALREADY CLAIMED THAT SINCE THE START OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE KERALA CONGRESS, THE MINISTRY HAS RELAXED ITS POLICY AGAINST THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MORE PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN KERALA. SIGNED EAVES
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